Canadian Centre
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**ROUNDTABLE ON NORTHERN FOREIGN POLICY:
FEEDBACK AND LOOK AHEAD**

Peter Moore,
Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

February 5, 2001
Whitehorse, Yukon

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Roundtable on Northern Foreign Policy:
Feedback and Look Ahead
February 5, 2001
Yukon College (Whitehorse, Yukon)

On February 5, 2001, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development convened a community meeting to follow-up the 1998 National Forum and the June 8, 2000 release of the federal government's foreign policy paper, "The Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy." The roundtable brought together academics, Board of Governors of the University of the Arctic, conservationists, government officials, Indigenous organizations, non-government organizations, and Yukon College to look at Canada's relations and links with its Arctic neighbours, the University of the Arctic, and regional aspects of U.S.-Canada relations.

Key items emerging from the discussion included:

- The need for advancing transboundary civil society relations and cooperation to meet new challenges, such as resource exploitation in the Arctic National Wildlife Range (ANWR).
- The growing confidence and outward-looking perspective of First Nations which are actively looking for social, political and economic ties across borders, in Yukon, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alaska, and Russia, among others.
- The need to include meaningfully civil society and Indigenous Peoples in the discussions and decisions about the construction of pipelines.
- The Canadian government desire to expand the mandate of the Arctic Council to look at social issues through the lens of sustainable development, rather than just environmental protection (see Appendix A).

Background

Sally Webber, President of Yukon College and Julie Rechel, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, co-chaired the meeting of 33 people, including two connected by telephone from the northern Yukon community of Old Crow. Also attending were representatives of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Environment Canada, Yukon Territory government, and Foreign Affairs and International Trade. (See attached list of participants and agenda.)

In the 2001 Speech from the Throne, Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson mentioned the North four times: "An innovative economy is one where the benefits of new ideas are shared by

every sector and every region — from East to West to North, from office workers to farm families," she said. "We must ensure that every region, every province and territory, every community, and every citizen has a strong voice and can contribute to building our nation. To bring the benefits of our prosperity to all communities, whether urban, rural, Northern or remote."

Canada is now well positioned to influence the Arctic Council into moving beyond its narrow mandate of environmental protection into one of promoting sustainable development. At the recent Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council at Barrow, Alaska (October 12-13, 2000), the Canadian-based Indigenous organizations, the Gwich'in Council International and the Arctic Athabaskan Council, joined the Inuit Circumpolar Council as Permanent Participants. Canada also provides funding to the Saami Council, representing the Sami Indigenous Peoples of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Russian Federation. Sustainable development is a key concern and interest of these groups.

The Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy

Wayne Lord, Director of the Aboriginal and Circumpolar Division of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, acknowledged that the Northern Dimension does not include everything recommended in the National Forum 1998 report. Canada made strategic choices about what it could and could not accomplish with limited resources, said Lord.

As a result of this focus, the Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy has four stated goals:

- to enhance the security and prosperity of Canadians, especially northerners and Aboriginal peoples;
- to assert and ensure the preservation of Canada's sovereignty in the North;
- to establish the Circumpolar region as a vibrant geopolitical entity integrated into a rules-based international system; and
- to promote the human security of northerners and the sustainable development of the Arctic.

He noted the Prime Minister's full support as shown in the 2001 Speech from the Throne, is a key factor in government departments and agencies promoting and implementing the Northern Dimension. Part of that will be including Canadian citizens in this process and working with the peoples and states of the Nordic countries, particularly with Russia and the European Union with its Nordic past, present and future chairs, Finland (1999), Sweden (2000) and Denmark (2001), respectively. This framework is now a cross-cutting theme for Foreign Affairs and International Trade units, Indian and Northern Affairs, the Canadian International Development Agency, Environment Canada and other federal government agencies and departments.

"It's this type of dialogue that's most important. We've had the support of our Ministers and that

gives us the green light. This is a government-wide initiative," said Lord.

Departments of the federal government are looking for new and innovative ways to engage civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and the peoples of other circumpolar countries, such as Russia. Ideas such as the "Arctic bridge", small and medium business development, women's participation in commercial networks, trade missions, workshops on "the North and governance" or northern mining, supporting traditional subsistence economies, were raised as a means to the common end of improving the lives of northerners. The government representatives made it clear they did not have all of the answers; they needed the ideas and energy of Northern civil society, individuals and organizations to make the Northern Dimension work.

"How do we turn this energy and steam into something other than hot air?" asked Wayne Lord.

Grand Chief Ed Shultz of the Council of Yukon First Nations, elected in February 2000, (also leader of Arctic Council Permanent Representative Arctic Athabaskan Council), described his peoples' efforts to build wider networks of people and possibilities beyond Yukon, to Alaska, to the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North and others. He said First Nations and the government can work together on developing the Northern Dimension, providing the government continues to show due respect to the self-governing Native communities as governments in their own right."States must recognize Indigenous Peoples to reduce tensions and get on with the business of improving everyone's lifestyles," said Shultz.

"First Nations did have a role in creating that foreign policy," Ed Shultz said about the Northern Dimension. He and other participants identified the sharing, management and control of natural resources, such as oil and gas as a key issue.

Arctic Council

"How do you do genuine decision-making between governments and Indigenous Nations?" asked Audrey McLaughlin. She raised the question to clarify whether Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council were "tolerated but not heard." (Permanent Participants do not have a vote on the Arctic Council.)

Philippe Cousineau, Deputy Director of Circumpolar Affairs at Foreign Affairs, replied that Permanent Participants are part of all discussions and they participate in some of the working groups. As for the dormant issue of whether Permanent Participants should have a vote or not, he noted that the Arctic Council has never put an issue to a vote, deferring to consensus, which includes the Permanent Participants.

Ed Shultz said that as a new Permanent Participant, the Arctic Athabaskan Council has not detected any sign of disrespect or indifference. He is concerned that the Participants' role is more representative than participative. There is also a political danger present of the perception (even if not real) that the Participants are acting as legitimizing agents for the agendas of the

circumpolar states. Shultz said that Permanent Participants should vote on policies and projects that have an impact on Indigenous Peoples. "Canada should advocate this position. [...] It would not be inconsistent with Canada's international image."

Wayne Lord replied that the Arctic Council is promoting cooperation and does not nor should operate like the United Nations. Some issues are prohibited from being discussed at the Arctic Council table. A key role for Indigenous Peoples is proposing sustainable development projects for the Arctic Council, which only needs the sponsorship of one state to do.

The Arctic Council remains a young international organization that is still agreeing on how to discuss the issues of the North. The Arctic Council is still trying to agree on the vocabulary to have a dialogue, said Lord.

University of the Arctic

The University of the Arctic was once a "wild" idea of Northern colleges and individuals which has antecedents in the international organization, the Circumpolar Universities Association. Now, the University of the Arctic is appointing members of the Board of Governors and designing a curriculum to meed northern needs and aspirations. Two members of the university's new Board of Governors, Audrey McLaughlin and Jan Henry Keskitalo (Saami College), attended.

"Students are now saying, when can we enroll in this University of the Arctic?" said Aron Senkpiel, Dean of the Arts and Science program at Yukon College and member of the planning committee for the university's baccalaureate degree. This degree will have three key components: the Baccalaureate of Circumpolar Studies, the Arctic Learning Environment, and the Circumpolar Mobility Program. The primary clients of this inclusive program will be "Northerners whose access to higher education is limited, to people who can't reach a post-secondary institution, can't speak the language or can't spend the money they don't have for an education," said Senkpiel. He added that with a framework in place, the process of designing the currciulum and organizing the network must become "more inclusive" such as other colleges, Indigenous Peoples and other parties.

An added challenge is the high number of prospective students who did not complete secondary school. Ed Shultz described the conflict facing many Indigenous students who grow up learning from one culture and then are confronted and pressured by the Western model of education and values. He suggested that there is tremendous potential for the University of the Arctic to create a model to encourage learning and reduce the inner conflict this experience provokes in Indigenous students.

"It's impossible to separate northern knowledge from northern post-secondary education," said Sally Webber. Audrey McLaughlin also emphasized the importance of "really using Northern knowledge instead of adjusting southern practices to the Arctic."

Harley Trudeau of the Executive Council Office of Yukon government, raised the need to overcome barriers for northern institutions to access federal educational and research grants; the current criteria frequently excludes them.

Canada-United States Relations

The roundtable was held the same day that Prime Minister Jean Chretién and President George W. Bush met for the first time. Roger Simmons, Consul General of Canada in Seattle, said that the hype that Chretién and Bush may disagree was predictable. When they meet,"it's about leaders dealing with how things are," he said. Bush is a strong supporter of a Free Trade Area of the Americas.

"If the border works, the relationship works." Simmons described the Canada-United States relationship as primarily an economic relationship, citing USD $1.3 billion of product per day crossing the border and that this relationship is even stronger on the Canadian side of the border. While the United States has invested USD $212 billion in Canada, Canadians have invested USD $145 billion in the United States, a per capita investment ratio of seven-to-one, in favor of the United States."You'll see examples of having two flags and one community" all along the border.

Despite these facts, Canada and the United States, especially among citizens, can and should form stronger bonds.

"We have not done enough to maximize the economic, academic and cultural relations between Canada and Alaska," he said. With regard to the Alaska Nature and Wildlife Reserve and plans for an installation of a gas pipeline, Simmons said Canada needs to be aware of the clout of the United States and react appropriately. Industry will decide the viability of the pipeline and Canada will facilitate their choice, he said, adding within the regulations and law of the land.

The State Department of the United States says if you deal with the United States, deal with the Alaskans, said Wayne Lord.

Pipelines and Drilling

When it comes to exploiting the natural resources of the Alaska Nature and Wildlife Reserve, Simmons said the US Congress will be the battleground and it may have a more conservationist attitude than that of President Bush. He also described Alaska politicians, Governor Tony Knowles, Alaska's sole Congressman Don Young, and Senators Ted Stevens and Frank Murkowski - all Republicans - as well-placed senior politicians. Young chairs the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Stevens chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Murkowski chairs the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. (Both Stevens and Murkowski have voted in favour of drilling in the Alaska Nature and Wildlife Reserve.) Together they influence more than a trillion dollars of federal government funds. Fostering good

relations with them will facilitate Canada-US relations in the North and across the border.

Ed Shultz said the United States bureaucracy is authoritarian and arrogant in its dealings with Canadians, Indigenous Peoples and even its own citizens. "The US bureaucracy has a John Wayne, off-the-hip attitude we'll have to deal with and that's a reality. That's where forums like this are really important," he said. "We've already had a sour taste of the American influence," referring to the Alaskan Highway. He added we should not allow legislators in Washington make decisions that affect "our backyard."

The discussion turned to the environmental impact of pipelines construction. Shultz raised the question of existing hazardous waste sites in Yukon, some dating back to the construction of the Alaska Highway and World War Two. How many more would be created with new pipeline construction?

"This is the year 2001 and we're still talking about cultures being decimated by one man's decisions. We're not prepared to let that happen," said Joe Linklater, Gwich'in First Nation. He raised the issue of the social impact of development, including alcoholism and the impact of thousands of pipeline workers descending on small communities.

Simmons also alerted the roundtable to the need for clear messages and understanding among Alaskans and the Indigenous Peoples of Yukon. The pro-development side will play one party against the other, for example using the development projects of the Gwich'um First Nations against the government, in their lobbying efforts. "We don't oppose development. We're very specific about the development we're opposing," said Linklater. He emphasized the need for more meaningful consultations.

Other issues raised included the Yukon River and the salmon treaty of 1985, the Kyoto agreement and the need for a sustainable energy program instead of simply securing more natural gas resources. Bob Van Dijken of the Yukon Conservation Society cited the Soft Energy 2000 Programme of the late Seventies, which required provinces to create alternative energy consumption plans. (The concept of "soft energy" is to move from energy consumption that creates grave and persistent risks to one in which energy is renewable, with fewer risks i.e. less pollution, improved health.) "That whole vision of a soft energy path is a whole lost opportunity over the last 20 years."

Building a pipeline today has a lesser impact on the environment due to new technology, said Harley Trudeau. For Canada to meet its Kyoto agreement commitments, he said finding and exploiting new natural gas deposits could lower the rising price and divert industry from reverting to other more damaging fossil fuels that could become cheaper if there was a natural gas shortage.

Conclusion

Before closing the roundtable, Sally Webber asked each participant to offer their opinion on the discussion. In the round, many of the participants expressed their appreciation at the opportunity to discuss the issues with everyone.

"Everyone here is doing international relations," said Philippe Cousineau, Deputy Director of Circumpolar Affairs (Foreign Affairs and International Trade).

Joan Eamer, President of the Yukon Science Institute, said that cooperation should include the need for more scientific exchanges and information sharing.

Virginia Labelle of the Yukon government's Women's Directorate, said she had connected with Harald Finkler of Indian and Northern Affair's Circumpolar Liaison Directorate, about women's entrepreneurship in the north.

Norwegian Jan Henry Keskitalo said he looked forward to future cooperation on the University of the Arctic.

Canada has the experience to help the Russian North build its civil society capacity as well as encourage more direct relations with local Russian companies, said Greg Poelzer, University of Northern British Columbia. The focus on the North, he said, is of "greatest importance."

Janet Campbell, Circumpolar Affairs, recalled a lunch conversation she had with Audrey McLaughlin about the need for more regular, consistent consultations with non-government organizations and the Yukon community.

"What I find interesting is how Foreign Affairs is opening up its policy development process to various actors, not just experts and other governments," said Floyd McCormick, a Yukon College instructor.

The foreign policy is going to have an impact on the Gwich'in First Nation, which is the largest landowner in Yukon, said Joe Linklater. Consultations must be genuine and have real impact on policy and decision-making. "Decisions made by Ottawa and Whitehorse affect the Gwich'in First Nation."

Webber concluded the roundtable with remarks, summing up the discussion:

- the expression of Northern values in the Northern foreign policy is necessary,
- respect for Aboriginal Peoples and their governments,
- Canadians have a special mission to respect Aboriginal Peoples and concretely support their participation in Canadian and international affairs,
- the social impact of economic developments with international dimensions must

be considered,

- recognize that Indigenous Peoples are "not anti-development" and that "mistakes do not have to be repeated" in development,
- there are intergenerational responsibilities in decision-making on northern issues,
- there is a need to adjust to cyclical economies and developmment and develop a resilient strategy for all decisions, including policymaking by consensus.

"We have something to give the world as well as ourselves by building on these ideas. We're not just inventing new structures. We're creating new ways of being," said Webber.

She thanked the Centre for organizing the roundtable, saying the event was "a wonderful way to have such a democratic discussion."

"I'm convinced that the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development is an open door and an excellent place to participate in shaping foreign policy."

APPENDIX A

Nine days after the roundtable, on Feb. 14, 2001, John Manley, Foreign Affairs Minister, and Pierre Pettigrew, Minister for International Trade released, "Agenda 2003, A Sustainable Development Strategy for the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade." Implementing the sustainable development aspects of the northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy is one of the policy's six major goals
(see http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/sustain/SustainDev/10855_DFAIT_S.D._Ev8.pdf).

Ongoing and consistent consultations will be a part of this agenda, said the report.
"The government, led by the Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs, will maintain a permanent outreach program domestically and internationally. Flexibility will be built into the process to ensure that the ongoing dialogue is interactive and dynamic."

Roundtable on Northern Foreign Policy: Feedback and Look Ahead

List of Participants

February 5, 2001
Yukon College
Whitehorse, Yukon

Sally Webber - Co-Chair
President
Yukon College

Julie Rechel - Co-Chair
Events Organiser
Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development (CCFPD)

Audrey McLaughlin
Board of Governors
University of the Arctic

Jan Henry Keskitalo
Board of Governors
University of the Arctic

Ed Schultz
Grand Chief
Council of Yukon First Nations

Dave Roddick
Special Advisor
Council of Yukon First Nations

Joe Linklater
Co-chair, Gwich'in Nation
Chief, Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation

Bob Van Dijken
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Chuck Tobin
Whitehorse Star

Paul Kishchuk
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Aron Senkpiel
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Instructor
Yukon College

Tim Topper
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Yukon Government

Harald Finkler
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Circumpolar Liaison Directorate
DIAND HQ

Elizabeth Hanson
Director
Claims and Indian Government
DIAND

Roger Simmons
Consulate General of Canada in Seattle

Wayne Lord
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Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon

Shirley Adamson
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Northern Native Broadcasting

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